SOME PRELIMINARY NOTES ON *ODONTOGNOPHOS DUMETATA* TREITSCHKE SSP. *HIBERNICA* FORDER (LEP.: GEOMETRIDAE)

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AFTER THE SUCCESSFUL identification of the unusual *dubitata*-like geometers found by Peter Forder and his wife in Co. Clare in August 1991 (Forder, 1991), the authors decided that an investigation was merited to determine if this attractive moth with its velvety deep slate grey ground colour, so perfectly matching the Burren rocks, was indeed a resident species and not a migrant.

A study of the nearest continental subspecies, of which there are a number, showed that it was closest to ssp. *margaritatus* Zerny from Aragon, Spain. Going eastwards, the resident form in France is ssp. *daubearia* Boisduval, which is brownish and more lightly marked. Going further east, the species tends to become browner and more heavily marked as is the case with specimens from the type locality in Dalmatia. In considering its likely origin, it presumably is yet another interglacial relict from the late pleistocene and is more evidence of a lingering mediterranean fauna on the west coast of Ireland. In this respect it is similar to *Calamia tridens occidentalis* Cockayne whose closest affinities appear to be with specimens from the Iberian peninsular according to Dr Cockayne (1954) and not to closer mainland Europe.

Culot (1919-1920) gave its foodplant as *Phillyrea latifolia* L., and the larva fully grown in June, but Forster and Wohlfahrt (1981) gave *Rhamnus* sp. as a foodplant as did Seitz (1912). Forster and Wohlfahrt also gave a somewhat misleading description of the larva as striped, smooth and flesh red, but more accurately, with a dorsal blackish line obliquely flecked with yellow.

During a visit to the Burren in June, 1992, B.E. spent three days searching for areas of likely foodplant and both *Rhamnus catharticus* L., and a prostrate form of *Frangula alnus* Mill. were discovered. Several days spent beating these potential foodplants producing a variety of larvae including *Philereme transversata britannica* Lempke, *Triphosia dubitata* L., in great abundance and *Hemithea aestivaria* Hübn. One possible larva of *Odontognophos dumetata* Trietschke which was fully grown was also obtained. This was confirmed when a male, the third Irish specimen, emerged on 24.7.92. We now had an idea of where to look.

We both returned in early August 1992, and spent a total of six nights running m.v. in likely areas in very poor weather conditions. Over a period of a week, we were able to record a total of eight *dumetata* males at light.

One female was discovered resting near one trap site. As this may have been a virgin female it was exposed in a makeshift cage in its habitat for possible pairing. No males were attracted and it was presumed that it had already paired. During the day, hours were spent unsuccessfully searching rocks and peering down nooks and crannies in the Burren locality where it was resident, but in this respect, none were seen or disturbed, so we had only the one female to rely on for a study of its life cycle.

About ten days later, the captive female produced many ova which were small for the size of the moth and a pale bluish-green in colour. They were laid loosely and not attached to any substrate; this was a surprise, since the area of the Burren where both moths and larva were found was low-lying and subject to winter flooding, judging by the detritus lying around. It would have been expected that the ova would overwinter on the twigs of its foodplant and hatch in the spring. A local farmer confirmed that in winter, the area would be under water for many days.

By the spring of 1993, it was obvious that the ova were infertile so we returned again, this time a little earlier, on the 20th May. Prolonged beating of the *Rhamnus* and *Frangula* bushes over several days produced only five *dumetata* larvae, which were half to threequarters grown, until realisation that larvae only seemed to occur in number where the *Rhamnus* was subject to winter inundation. Subsequently another locality was discovered which did not match the original situation, but was heavily sheltered by scrub.

The larva is somewhat rough looking, similar in texture to *Gnophos obscuratus* D.&S. At full growth it is 25-30mm in length, tapering to head. When young it is blackish-blue flecked with yellow dorsally. When fully grown, the ground colour is light to dark fleshy-grey with vague longitudinal striations running along the length of body. The dorsal line is prominent and blackish on segments 1, 2 and 3 and even more marked on 9, 10 and 11. On the middle segments, there is a yellowish dorsal mark with skin colour blackish anterior to it. The head is blackish and speckled dark grey. The larva perfectly matches its resting background, a *Rhamnus* twig, and if disturbed immediately drops without a silk thread and forms a characteristic U shape. The pupa is stout and reddish-brown and, if given a suitable peaty medium, pupates in a silk lined chamber. The first imagines in captivity emerged at dusk on 15.7.93 and continued until 4.9.93. Pairings were again attempted, but not observed and only infertile ova were produced.

In conclusion, it is to be wondered what other relict species are as yet undiscovered on the west coast of Ireland. It is remarkable that such a large moth, widely, if probably thinly spread, can survive undetected despite many visits by lepidopterists to the Burren. Professor E.B. Ford (Ford, 1955) prophetically stressed the need for entomological exploration in Ireland and this shows how right he was.

Finally, we would like to thank Anne and Tom Martin of "Villa Maria", now becoming well known as a base for lepidopterists, for their essential "back-up service" during our visits.

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Lepidoptera in Fuerteventura (Canary Isle) 1994

I spent a week on this very arid, very barren Island, from 14th to 21st September 1994. It was not surprising, given the nature of the terrain, that lepidoptera (and many other forms of wildlife) were extremely scarce. On 19th and 20th September, I positively identified about six specimens of the well-known migrant *Catopsilia florella*. I record this because Higgins and Riley (1983, p.34) state "recorded only from Gran Canary and Tenerife for the first time in 1964, and Gomera in 1974". There may, of course, be records for Fuerteventura of which I am unaware.

The only other Lepidoptera found were three specimens of the Lycaenid *Zizeeria knysna* Trimen, and a few *Macroglossum stellatarum* L.

Reference: Higgins and Riley. *Field guide to Butterflies of Great Britain and Europe* 5th Ed. 1983, Collins.

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Two records of *Tipula* spp. (Diptera: Tipulidae) from Andalucia, Spain

A brief visit to Andalucia in mid-October, 1989, produced just two tipulids. They remained unidentified until recently when I received two reprints which solved the apparent problems. The two insects were collected while the weather was still seasonally dry. Only as we were leaving did a thunderstorm and associated rain suddenly fill the dry water courses and produce dramatic flash floods.

Firstly, a small male *Tipula* with long antennae had eluded any attempt even to be put into an appropriate subgenus. I now find that by coincidence the same species was collected by Dr Christophe Dufour in the previous week and has since been described by him as a new subspecies, *Tipula (Vestiplex) vaillanti andalucia* (Dufour, C. & Oosterbroek, P., 1990, *Mitt. schweiz.ent.Ges.*, **63**: 233-236). The finding of females allows the correct placement of this species within this large genus. The species was described from north Africa. My specimen, found on 14th October, 1989, near Mijas, was from a stony slope within an old olive grove, which habitat accords with the findings of this species to date.

The other is *Tipula (Acutipula) triangulifera* Loew, from the *maxima* species group which have been recently treated (de Jong, H., 1993, *Ent. Scand.*, **24**(4): 433-457). A male was caught at light near Fuengirola, near